



PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Announces \$1.6 Million Grant for Design and Engineering in New Bedford Harbor

Baker-Polito Administration announced a \$1.6 million grant for the design and engineering for the potential dredging of New Bedford's inner harbor

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Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

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**NEW BEDFORD** — The Baker-Polito Administration announced a \$1.6 million grant for the design and engineering for the potential dredging of New Bedford's inner harbor. This marks an important step in the

long-term effort to support the maritime economy of Southeastern Massachusetts, including the communities of New Bedford and Fairhaven.

The scope of the design will include commercial berths and important navigational areas, which will be completed concurrently. This phase is estimated to take 12 months.

“Our administration is committed to developing important assets that drive our regional economies and are pleased to partner with cities and towns to increase capacity at the local level,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “This investment in New Bedford Harbor underscores our dedication to strengthening the South Coast region and the local maritime economy.”

“The maritime economy has deep roots in Massachusetts, and our coastal communities are critical partners in our long-term success, having created jobs and fostered industries for centuries off our coastline,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. “Our investment in the future of New Bedford’s harbor will increase the potential of the regional maritime economy, connect residents to new jobs, and provide new resources to the city.”

“For the past year, the Baker-Polito Administration has been studying the dredging needs across the Commonwealth,” **said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash**. “We are pleased to take this important first step here in New Bedford and we look forward to working with other communities to identify ways to ensure working harbors and waterways can best support the local and regional economies.”

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), New Bedford is the number one port in the country in terms of dollar value of catch. A 2016 economic study prepared for the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission found maritime jobs represent about 15 percent of the employment base in the city of New Bedford.

New Bedford and Fairhaven concur that dredging is needed to open up access to additional commercial fishing vessels, contributing to new and expanded processing operations, ship repair, maintenance support, and job growth.

“The dredging of New Bedford harbor is crucial for the continued development of our economy — additional jobs and new revenue will help us ensure that we remain the highest valued fishing port in the entire country,” **said State Representative Antonio F.D. Cabral (D – New Bedford)**. “This design and engineering grant is a critical first step towards accomplishing the full dredging of the harbor, opening up economic opportunities in the city.”

“I am very pleased that the Baker-Polito Administration has committed this money to our local economy. This engineering money is as important to our seaport economy as building roadways and highways for

our transportation economy. Once again the Governor has delivered for us,” **said State Representative Christopher Markey (D – Dartmouth).**

“Dredging the inner harbor is a major priority if we are to continue to unlock the potential of the Port of New Bedford,” **said State Representative Bill Straus (D –Mattapoisett).** “There is a clear and direct connection between the work being planned and jobs along the waterfront, and I am pleased to see that Governor Baker and his administration are making this investment. I will continue to work with him and the Lieutenant Governor to implement the design and permitting in a way that gets the actual dredging on schedule.”

“The dredging of New Bedford harbor is highly critical for economic growth here on the South Coast and throughout the Commonwealth,” **said State Representative Paul Schmid (D – Westport).** “This project has the potential to add hundreds of new jobs and millions of dollars in increased tax revenues for our communities. Thank you to the Baker-Polito Administration for making this key investment, and continuing to support the blue economy.”

“This is welcome news for the Port of New Bedford because it will enable ships to obtain access to the numerous marine-related businesses on the Waterfront. These funds are critically important for the enhancement and development of our maritime industries,” **said State Representative Robert Koczera (D – New Bedford).**

“New Bedford has made a strong business case that funding for berth dredging in the harbor will unlock significant private sector investment and create hundreds of new jobs,” said **New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell.** “I’m grateful to our close working relationship with the Baker-Polito Administration in our effort to modernize the Port of New Bedford and to accelerate its growth.”

“I applaud the Baker-Polito Administration for committing funds to this critical phase of work,” **said Pierre Bernier, Stevedoring Manager at Maritime Terminal, Inc.** “The long term value of maintaining and dredging the harbor to its design depth would support increased traffic in and out of the New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor for decades to come.”

“I am pleased that the state is taking an important step in ensuring the vitality of New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor,” **said Kevin McLaughlin, Owner, Fairhaven Shipyard Companies, Inc.** “As one of Massachusetts busiest commercial and recreational harbors dredging of these waterways is essential to the ongoing viability of my business. As I look to continue and expand our business, it is absolutely critical that navigation depths are maintained in the harbor.”

“We are excited the Commonwealth is taking this step to lay the groundwork for dredging of New Bedford Harbor, which is the home of our Vessel Maintenance Facility,” **said Robert B. Davis, General Manager, Steamship Authority.** “This work will be a critical factor in our ability to maintain our essential

transportation services for the islands of Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket. The Steamship Authority’s Vessel Maintenance Facility is a vital part of our mission and legislative mandate of providing adequate transportation of persons and necessities of life for both of those islands, whose residents rely upon the Steamship Authority to be their lifeline to the mainland. New Bedford Harbor is also used by SeaStreak, a private ferry operator that is licensed by the Steamship Authority to provide important passenger ferry service between New Bedford and both islands during the summer.”

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